

A

LETTER

FROM THE

Howard F.

EARL OF CARLISLE

TO

EARL FITZWILLIAM;

IN

REPLY

TO HIS

LORDSHIP'S TWO LETTERS.

SECOND EDITION.

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A
L E T T E R, &c.

Grosvenor Place, April 17, 1795.

MY DEAR FITZWILLIAM,

A FRIENDSHIP which commenced in the earliest period of youth, and which I trust will only cease with the termination of life, would readily supply sufficient excuse for heavier difficulties than those imposed upon me, in consequence of the two letters addressed to me, in answer to mine of the 21st of February, having found their way to the inspection of the public.

It is not easy for me to guess what idea the public may have formed of a letter which has produced such copious answers from you, and seemed to force you to a justification beyond the limits of a secret and confidential correspondence.

In turning to that letter, I think you will perceive nothing, besides my zeal for your welfare and interest, which could have prompted me to the communication and disclosure of such opinions on the opening of your administration, as I was enabled to gather, and to which (however erroneously or correctly conceived) it appeared to me that you ought not to have remained a stranger.

If my poor sentiments could have been collected by you, at the dawn of your administration, and which it was not my intention to obtrude upon you, they could only be discovered in my fears, that you had adopted a system difficult to recede from, or abandon, before you had been long enough near the source of real information, confidently to take by your own scale the just measure of its size and magnitude. God knows, I never meant (though writing hastily, I might express myself inaccurately) to pronounce with arrogance on the great measures themselves, then in your contemplation to advance, but, with diffidence, left the conception and consideration of their probable effects to the judgment of your near political connections; capacitated by their situations and knowledge to trace and pursue their tendencies and bearings, and who, report did not scruple to assert, were both surprised and alarmed at the rapidity with which these great objects were approached.

I stated

I stated to you, that a general belief prevailed, that, in your final arrangements and concluding conversation with his Majesty's ministers, at which others assisted, it was settled that no material measure, either as to *persons* or *things*, was to be decided upon without further communication and concurrence with the Cabinet of England. I might have added that this the more easily obtained in the world, from the obvious necessity that the most perfect and harmonious understanding should prevail between the governments of both countries as to their system of rule; an understanding always necessary, but more particularly so at this moment, when both have objects of such importance and joint interest before them, as demand a suspension at least of every thing not intrinsically connected with them.

As to the sudden dismissal of certain individuals, who had not had the opportunity, if you could suppose they had the will, to offend against your administration, I certainly had not the same anxiety to keep back my sentiments upon that step. Justice to some of those persons, who, during my government, served the public with fidelity, honesty, and ability (I mean Mr. Beresford, &c. &c.) demanded of me a less cautious mode of expression; and, in truth, your subsequent reasoning upon those dismissions calls upon me to say a word or two upon this subject.

Of the alarming power to government of the Beresford family or followers, I pretend not to form a comprehension ; nor can I conceive how any Lord Lieutenant, standing upon your high ground, challenging the public confidence by the undisguised fairness of your good intentions, could ever be destitute of the means to crush any power (but particularly that which derived the essence of its strength from office) whenever such power presumed to stir a hair-breadth in an attempt to molest the government of the kingdom in that road, in which for the public interest it thought fit to travel. But till that vain and mischievous disposition should have manifested itself, I clearly leaned to the opinion, that the hand of superior strength ought not to have been stretched out against it.

You say to me, in regard to some others, " you left them clerks, I found them ministers." When and how, this metamorphosis happened, I am unable to conjecture. That I left them most usefully employed for the use of their principal, and for the quick dispatch of business, is unquestionably true. With long habits of intercourse with men both in high and in subordinate official situations, for unsuspected integrity and secrecy, for mildness, and conciliating manners, for the most perfect arrangement and method in conducting the business of his office, I can fairly say, that I never witnessed the equal of Mr. Sackville
Hamil-

Hamilton. Mr. Cooke was, in my time, young, but quick, diligent, and very promising as a useful person in the station he then filled. Respecting others, with whom I never had any connection, and who were to remove from the elevated situations of their profession, you call upon me to admit the propriety of such removals, on the foot of having from necessity a splendid parliamentary debater annexed to the condition of a great law servant of the crown. Indeed, my dear Fitzwilliam, I subscribe to no such opinion, and, in vindication of a very opposite one, refer you to the example of many men on this side the water, whose acknowledged abilities and learning would have been lost to the state, had they been driven from their situations, because they made not the same brilliant figure in the senate, which they had done at the bar.

I have dwelt the longer upon this part of the subject, to shew you how fairly a different opinion may be opposed to your's, and that such may be conscientiously entertained, without any design to wound your feelings, or injure your reputation. In Mr. Pitt's endeavour to hold up a shield for the shelter of persons who had merited the favour of the last Lord Lieutenant by their services, and on whose conduct no blame or censure had attached, I can only perceive an instance of firmness and of justice; and surely it requires explanation to convince plain and impartial men, that

such removals, taking the mode, time, and provocation, were not at least a seeming departure from that amicable dealing towards the King's Prime Minister, which we at a distance were taught to hope and believe, was to mark the junction of your party with Mr. Pitt.

I dwell upon it for another motive which touches me more personally. By the extensive dispersion of your letters, I find myself the conductor of severe animadversion, where I cannot agree that it ought to have been directed. To have consented to have been the bearer of such sharp invective to the doors of the Duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt, &c. &c. I must previously have acknowledged the justice of it, before I undertook so painful an office: but, acknowledging its justice, could I stop there, and continue an independent support of a minister capable of the monstrous design of risking the condition of Ireland, of flinging it into the greatest probable confusion by trifling with its hopes and expectations, for the purpose of weakening a party, of whose strength and importance he confessed the value, by invitation and acceptance; and which strength and importance, in the public estimation, must be as necessary for his purposes at this moment, as the first hour you flung your weight into his scale?

Such are the difficulties I allude to, in the beginning of my letter: in the first place, that of
appear.

appearing by silence to adopt that censure I am made to convey; in the next, of submitting my sentiments freely to you, and thus approaching a matter of a most delicate nature, where the public curiosity ought not to be conducted with any observance of that discretion and secrecy, which my education has led me to consider as not to be dispensed with in great transactions of Government.

On the great question of the additional indulgences at this time to be extended to the Roman Catholics, I shall say but little. The sentiments of an individual would, in this place, obtrude themselves very clumsily. I shall hope to be believed, when I assert that I have toleration not only upon my lips, but in my heart; and that, in my experience, I never witnessed any thing in the Roman Catholics of Ireland that gave me a moment's doubt of their loyalty and attachment to their Sovereign. That an unfortunate difference, on the subject of more indulgences to be granted at this moment, has been raised between you and the Cabinet of England, we all know, and all deplore. But you are much mistaken, if you think that the world, endeavouring with very inadequate means to detect on which side the error or misapprehension lies, even supposing it should be suspected to be with you, has ever aimed any censure at your head, which made it necessary for you to appear at the tribunal of the public, and to open a defence, in my mind
unpro-

unprovoked by accusation from any quarter, forcing you to advance, upon such tender and delicate ground, to points generally not considered accessible, unless where an attack upon life is meditated, or, what I feel is dearer to you, fame and honour.

You allude to a part of my letter, where, joining in the general anxiety as to the precipitancy with which your great measures seemed to be brought forth, I confessed that I could not contemplate the innovation without terror. Always being taught to consider the Roman Catholic question as of great moment, it was not extraordinary that the quickness with which you decided upon it (I mean not to arraign that prompt decision) should have occasioned a strong shock of alarm to me, however incompetent to direct an accurate view to its near or its remote consequences.

Under every circumstance of disagreement in opinion, of a nature less reasonably interesting the attention of the political world, violent surmises will be formed on both sides, which candour and moderation would lose their labour in attempting to reconcile. Doctor Barrow says, every fact has two handles, one which severity, ill-nature, and harshness are ever inclined to lay hold of; the other constantly presents itself to calmness, moderation, and gentleness. I shall address myself to the latter, not the former, in

order to gather and submit to you the judgment, which I conceive candid and honourable men have formed upon these unfortunate transactions.

In many parts of your letter, if I mistake not, it may be collected, that owing to the circumstances of the times, the pressure of business produced by the war, and the necessity of pointing all thought, as well as all exertion, towards the defence of the empire, it was a general wish to postpone the consideration of the merits of the Roman Catholic question to a moment better fitted for a less interrupted investigation of it. Of course, excepting otherwise driven by necessity, we should have seen you acting at least in unison with the views of the English Cabinet, had you terminated the Session of Parliament, with this point still reserved for future consideration. You, for the reasons which you have assigned, conceive that necessity to be so apparent and so strong, as to leave you, in policy and prudence, no choice or remedy. Upon this point the whole matter seems to hinge. The public, turning towards the English Administration for explanation, discover them questioning that necessity which you consider as irresistible. Great stress is laid upon the impossibility of utterly preventing this discussion, from some quarter or another, being forced upon the Houses of Parliament. That some one, eager in the cause, would infallibly stir it, though Mr. Grattan had held

held back, was clearly to be foreseen. But as, in that case, the argument for suspending might have been adopted by those who were inclined to fall into the views of both the Lord Lieutenant and the English Minister, it did not seem to follow that, on such ground, a person so high in name and reputation, and so closely connected with the Castle, was impelled to seize that hour for giving notice of his bill, sustained by Government and its adherents.

Still keeping clear of an impertinent obtrusion of my own sentiments upon the great question itself, I only take as an hypothesis, that the King's ministers did not, in their judgments, yield to that *necessity*, which you state as sufficiently powerful with you, to determine you, no longer to restrain yourself to those limits, within which it appears, at least for the time, it was the wish of your political connections that you should have confined yourself. And from this, we guess has arisen that fatal misunderstanding, which has deprived Ireland of so much honour and integrity, the King of a faithful servant, has loosened the bonds of the closest friendship, has carried the poison of distrust and resentment into houses never before at variance, and conveyed a heavy charge indeed to the doors of his Majesty's ministers.

May I, my dear friend, in this place, be permitted to say, that, weighing every part of this subject in the most dispassionate and impartial manner

manner I am able, I never heard the sound of accusation of your conduct in any quarter, perceived no attack aimed against your character, no stain endeavoured to be fixed upon your reputation, no abandonment of private friendship or affection, no wretched symptom of that refined dissimulation which you fancy you have detected. In short, nothing that wore the shape of accusation or charge, which brought you to the painful alternative of repelling or submitting to.

Under the strong feeling of a repugnance (which I am confident you will comprehend and excuse) to lend myself with a silence, that might argue willingness to become the channel of censure to individuals who had acted serviceably and honourably by me; to others, whose conduct I have had opportunity of watching, and still retain my opinion of their unshaken friendship and attachment to you; lastly, to others, on whom I could not assist at heaping such disgrace, without holding them out, at the same time, as utterly unfit for the high stations they fill; I have been obliged thus tediously to trespass on your patience, an apology for which can only be looked for and found in that friendship I before alluded to, and which has, for so many years past, taught us indulgence to each other.

Ever yours, &c. &c.

F I N I S.



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